TD

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

This record is subject to correction.

Participants wishing to make corrections should submit them in writing to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva, within one week of receiving the record in their working language.

Corrections to the records of the meetings of the Board at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.79-51920

Technology (item 13 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

26. The PRESIDENT drew attention to document TD/B/718 concerning the convening of certain meetings between the fifth and sixth sessions of the Conference to examine the main issues related to the transfer of technology. The Board might wish to take note of the document and transmit it to UNCTAD V for consideration under the appropriate item of its provisional agenda. It might also wish to request the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to make proposals on the subject of advisory services on technology to UNCTAD V.

27. It was so decided.

Institutional issues (item 10 of the provisional agenda of the Conference)

Rationalization of the structure of the permanent machinery of UNCTAD

28. The PRESIDENT drew attention to draft resolution TD/B/L.512 which the Board had decided to defer until the present session. He suggested that, in the light of further informal consultations that had been held, the draft resolution should be referred to UNCTAD V.

29. It was so decided.

General Assembly resolutions

30. The PRESIDENT said that the Board might wish to note the following General Assembly resolutions in the context of forthcoming negotiations at UNCTAD VI: 33/196, 197, 198, 198, 153, 154, 155, 159, 199.

31. It was so decided.

32. Mr. PRIETO-CASTRO (Philippines) expressed the hope that the third Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Restrictive Business Practices, whose sixth session was to be held from 19 to 23 April 1979, would resume its work, in which case the Conference could act on General Assembly resolution 33/153 instead of merely noting it.

OTHER BUSINESS (agenda)

(a) REVIEW OF THE CALENDAR OF MEETINGS (TD/B/L.525)

33. Mr. BRATHCUD (Director, Division for Programme Support Services) said that consultations held by the President had led to the conclusion that it would be preferable to hold the first part of the nineteenth session of the Board from 8 to 19 October 1979, thus enabling the Working Party on the Programme Budget and Medium-Term Plan to meet from 1 to 5 October without overlapping with the meeting of the Board. The first statement in footnote (a) of annex I to document TD/B/L.525 concerning the duration of the session would remain in the text to be approved by the Board.

34. Referring to paragraph 7 (c) of the Secretary-General's report, it should be recalled that the International Cocoa Council at its twelfth session, held in London on 15 and 16 March, had agreed that the proposed consultations between the Chairman of the United Nations Cocoa Conference and representatives of exporters and importers should be held in London during the week beginning 11 June 1979. Following these consultations, the Chairman would decide whether to request the Secretary-General of UNCTAD to reconvene the Conference. Should the Chairman so decide, the most appropriate dates would be in the period 16 July to 3 August 1979. Consequently, the Board might wish to pencil-in the dates, subject to confirmation after the June consultations. Some concern had been expressed that the proposed dates coincided with the meetings in July. If dates in July were chosen, the Secretary-General would consult delegations to see whether overlapping could be avoided.

35. Regarding the resumption of the United Nations Negotiating Conference on a Common Fund and the timing of the meetings of the Interim Committee established by the Conference to consider the elements requiring further elaboration, to draft the articles of agreement, and to make recommendations regarding the preparatory work required to bring the Fund into operation, the Secretary-General of UNCTAD suggested holding the first session of the Interim Committee from 20 to 31 August 1979. As the date has only been proposed that day, many delegations preferred to reserve their positions until they could consult their Governments. The secretariat therefore proposed that the date be pencilled-in as subject to confirmation.

36. The over-all calendar of meetings for the remainder of 1979 would be reviewed by UNCTAD V, and the Secretary-General suggested that the timing of other sessions of the Interim Committee and of a resumption of the Negotiating Conference itself be discussed at Manila. The calendar of meetings should also indicate that the balance remaining for other meetings under the Integrated Programme was 27 weeks. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD hoped to hold informal consultations with the co-ordinators at Manila on the question of the organization of the work of the Interim Committee.

37. With regard to the financial implications of the decision concerning the United Nations Cocoa Conference 1979, document TD/COCOA.5/C/Add.1 estimated the cost at $241,000. The financial implications of reconvening the Negotiating Conference on a Common Fund and the meeting of the Interim Committee were shown in document TD/IPC/CF/Conf.16/Add.4 as $1,560,000.

38. Four major negotiating conferences had already been held under UNCTAD auspices in 1979, and counting those in progress or requested, 15 such conferences would have been held in the next year as the fifth session of UNCTAD. A considerable number of other UNCTAD meetings were also scheduled for 1979 or had been requested by various bodies. The calendar represented 115 weeks of meetings, as against the record of 101 1/2 weeks in 1978, which had also been, not surprisingly, a record year in terms of lateness in the availability of documents.

39. For some time past, the secretariat felt that it had reached a critical level in its capacity to satisfy the obligations of a calendar unreasonably overloaded bearing in mind the services available to UNCTAD. As it had stated the previous year (TD/B/SR.504, para. 24), the secretariat could no longer ensure adequate preparation of the relevant documents for the proposed programme of meetings, which after all only took into account requests by intergovernmental bodies in UNCTAD or intergovernmental conferences under the auspices of UNCTAD.

The fact that four conferences had held resumed sessions during the first four months of 1979 adversely affected the preparation of documents for UNCTAD V. It was obvious that the secretariat had become quite unable to provide Governments with the necessary documentation for their meetings in good time, and the Secretary-General of UNCTAD would therefore take up at Manila the question of the resources required by UNCTAD in order to fulfil the role that Governments wished to assign to it.

40. Mr. BRILLANTES (Philippines) considered that Mr. Berthoud's warning should be taken very seriously. It was obvious that UNCTAD would have to expand its activities, but any decision in that respect could only be taken with the consent of the members of the Board and the members of UNCTAD. He wished to emphasize the responsibility of delegations, because any decision regarding expansion would require appropriate action in the General Assembly, and decisions taken in the Board frequently failed to be implemented owing to an excess of timidity in the Fifth Committee. The secretariat should make it clear that undertaking any new activity would require additional resources. In his experience, new activities by UNCTAD had frequently been frustrated because of a lack of co-ordination between delegations in UNCTAD and in the General Assembly.

41. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Board take note of the changes in the calendar of meetings for the remainder of 1979, as well as of the financial implications presented orally. Furthermore, the Board might wish to recommend that UNCTAD V should study the calendar of meetings with a view to adjusting it to the possibilities available for holding such meetings.

42. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 7.25 p.m.